

**CALIFORNIA BIPARTSIAN CONGRESSIONAL LUNCHEON
OPENING REMARKS**

**Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard (CA-34)
(Cannon Caucus Room, Capitol Hill)
12:00 p.m. Tues. March 10, 2009**

Good afternoon.

It's a pleasure to join my friend and colleague David Dreier in welcoming you to our nation's capitol.

I especially welcome Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Pasadena Mayor Bill Bogaard, Santa Monica Mayor Ken Genser, Palm Springs Mayor Steve Pougnet and Los Angeles Police Chief William Bratton who are joined by members of the Board of Supervisors from Los Angeles and San Francisco, city council members from Los Angeles, Oxnard, Riverside, San Gabriel, San Buenaventura and Thousands Oaks, and nearly 20 collaborative organizations.

Together, you all make a distinguished and effective delegation of more than 200 business leaders, civic leaders, and advocacy organizations from across the Southern California region.

Your collective advocacy during this difficult time in our nation's history is needed now more than ever.

As you know, Southern California businesses are facing significant challenges.

For example, in December, California's exports dropped by 13.7 percent and, over the past year, container volumes have declined 10 percent at the Port of L.A. and 23.4 percent at the port of Long Beach.

Together these ports are the fifth largest port complex in the world.

And LAX, the world's busiest origin and destination airport experienced a drop of almost 3 million passengers last year.

Economists on both sides of the aisle, agree we need swift and robust action to counter this troubling downturn.

The recent passage by Congress of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act is an important milestone in beginning this desperately needed boost to our ailing economy and helping American families weather the worst of this economic crisis.

While over the next two years the Recovery Act is expected to create or preserve close to 400,000 jobs in California alone, the challenges threatening our economic assets remain significant and must be addressed to ensure long-term economic and business growth and job retention.

This is vital not only for the benefit of our Southern California region but for our entire nation. This is the critical message you bring to Washington, D.C.

The future of our country is directly related to the future of the Los Angeles region.

Your advocacy will help my congressional colleagues, who represent very different parts of our country, better understand how economic issues important to our Southern California region directly impact the well being of their constituents.

And your advocacy will help Members of Congress and officials at all levels of our federal government understand the significant connection between the economy of Southern California and the successful growth and long-term prosperity of our nation and the world economy.

While there is no dispute that economic conditions will get worse before they get better, your mission and your presence on Capitol Hill will make a positive difference.

So once again, I sincerely thank each and every one of you for taking time from your business, your community and your family to personally deliver this crucial message to our nation's capital.

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